

**City of Minnetonka Beach
Park Commission Meeting Minutes
February 22, 2017**

Members Present: Chair: Dan Forbes; Vice Chair: Patty Rezabek; Commissioners: Gerry Boschwitz, Joe Pagano and Jody Sperduto

Absent: Commissioners Diane Rogers

Staff Present: City Administrator Susanne Griffin

Council Liaison: Council Member Andrew Myers

Chair Forbes called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Approve the February 22, 2017 Meeting Agenda

A motion was made by Commissioner Pagano and seconded by Commissioner Boschwitz to approve the February 22, 2017 meeting agenda with the addition to review and approve the Rules of Procedure. With all members voting in favor, motion carried.

2. Approve the January 3, 2017 Park Commission Meeting Minutes

Two errors were noted; one on page 2, remove the word Vice before Chair Forbes, and clarification on page 2, third paragraph from top regarding sprouting trees as a sign of unhealthy trees.

A motion was made by Commissioner Boschwitz and seconded by Commissioner Pagano to approve the January 3, 2017 meeting minutes as amended. With all members voting in favor, motion carried.

3. Budget Review

3.1. 2017 Budget Recap

Chair Forbes explained that the amount requested was not communicated to the City Administrator during the 2017 budget process and therefore the final, City Council approved budget is different than what the commission had requested. Members discussed how this would impact their planning for the year.

While there was no change to the bottom line amount approved by the City Council for the 2017 Park budget, after discussion commissioners made the following adjustments to specific accounts within the Park budget:

- Increase tree replacement from \$4000 to \$5000
- Increase Miscellaneous from \$2500 to \$2550
- Remove \$450 from chemical treatment
- Remove \$600 from raking/weed removal

A motion was made by Commissioner Sperduto and seconded by Commissioner Rezabek to approve stated adjustments to the 2017 budget. With all members voting in favor, motion carried.

3.1.1. Library Flower boxes –

As discussed at the previous meeting with Council Member Bartel purchasing flowers for the library window boxes, Commissioners discussed the budget amount and decided to not make any changes.

3.1.2. Tree Purchases

Chair Forbes stated that Otten Brothers has been the city's tree provider over the past couple of years. Commissioner Sperduto provided information on how the city decided to use Otten Brothers. She stated that three years ago they had gotten bids from four other nurseries and they learned that while Minnetonka Beach isn't a big enough customer to get a great discount, Otten Brothers agreed to a 25% discount if trees were ordered in February. They included a two-year guarantee, tree planting and follow-up on the trees. Otten Brothers also checked on the trees, wrapped them, watered them, and provided extensive advice to the city. They also gave the city first access to their trees when they have their annual sale. Sperduto stated that she would want to know that the same level of service would be included with another vendor.

Chair Forbes thought rebidding these trees should be done every 3 or so years. Commissioner Pagano said he agreed with that and would be in favor of creating specifications with a complete list of expectations to best compare vendors.

Commissioners discussed the city's tree needs and whether a longer-term tree planting plan would make sense. They discussed some potential criteria for specifications which included guarantee, level of service: delivery, planting, watering, maintenance, and consultation.

Council Liaison Myers talked about his personal experience with purchasing trees and thinks the city can get them cheaper, but he also agreed that service and guarantees are important.

Commissioners discussed authorizing Commissioner Rezabek to create specifications for a longer-term tree planting plan (three years) that would include consultation for a tree plan. Commissioner Rezabek suggested that she approach Otten Brothers about the long-term plan idea and get their feedback on types of trees and locations.

After much discussion, Commissioners authorized Commissioner Rezabek to bid out a strategic plan for tree replacement and be prepared to bring bids back to the Commission at the April meeting for a vote. Commissioner Rezabek asked that Commission Sperduto assist with the process due to her knowledge and history of the topic.

4. Maintenance Reports

4.1. Half Moon Park Update –

Chair Forbes said that Half Moon park looks good in the snow, and will be completed in the spring or after spring rains. Commissioners discussed a storm sewer pipe that goes from Ray Peters Park to Half Moon Park and the impact on flooding at Half Moon, and Utilities Commission work on Stormwater issues, particularly on Lafayette Road. The Commissioners asked the minutes to reflect that they are concerned about any potential stormwater system that might negatively impact Half Moon Park.

4.2. Gardener

Chair Forbes stated that Garden Gate is willing to stay on as the gardener. The city did not receive any complaints and they performed their work within their budget. He recommended renewing their contract for 2017 not to exceed \$4000. Commissioner Rezabek suggested combining bullets, and adding one for consultation. Administrator Griffin stated that she would include the contract on the consent agenda for the March 13th City Council meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rezabek and seconded by Commissioner Sperduto to renew the Garden Gate contract for 2017 in an amount not to exceed \$4000, combine bullets for weeding, pruning and mulching, add consultation bullet. With all members voting in favor, motion carried.

4.3. Beach

Commissioner Boschwitz stated that he has done research and gotten some bids ranging from \$2400 to \$8400 for weed removal. He would like to continue his research and bring back specific bids for the Park Commission to vote on at the April meeting.

Commissioner Sperduto asked about what the city doing about personal items being left on city property such as the docks near the Arcola Bridge. Administrator Griffin stated that a letter went to the dock slip holders reminding them to remove personal items. She agreed to send a letter each fall stating that if these items aren't removed, the city would dispose of them.

4.4. Emerald Ash Borer

Commissioner Sperduto stated that 2017 is a non-treatment year and that the city is ahead of the curve in terms of EAB.

4.5. Boulevards

Vice Chair Rezabek stated that the grassy areas along the road are a mess with all the construction. She asked what could be done to hold contractors accountable for repairing these areas after construction. Administrator Griffin explained that homeowners and contractors sign an agreement to repair damage to city property because of the construction. Griffin will talk with Zoning Administrator Gozola to see if these areas can be inspected and the agreement enforced before issuing a certificate of occupancy to homeowners.

4.6. Minnetonka Beach Sign – Spruce trees obstructing sight lines.

Council Member Bartel brought this up at last meeting. As a result, a number of commissioners drove the area and found that the spruce tree to the west of the sign and an arborvitae are limiting sight lines and will become more problematic as they grow. It was suggested that the spruce tree be moved back into the park, and also move and trim the arborvitae with funds coming out of the tree replacement budget. Commissioner Rezabek will talk with Bartlett about either moving or removing the trees.

4.7. Crabapple trimming and treating costs

Vice Chair Rezabek said Ben Young was willing to trim the crab apples, however Commissioner Sperduto spoke with Bartlett about a package deal to trim and spray and suggested it might be better to have Bartlett do both. Commissioner Rezabek will talk with Bartlett about doing this.

Commissioner Rezabek showed the other members the city map showing a small parcel of city property at the end of Huntington Point Rd East that was not surveyed/inventoried for ash trees.

Rezabek would like to ask Bartlett to add those trees to the list/inventory for EAB. Rezabek will also talk with Bartlett about some stump grinding where two maples were removed to see if the stump grinding was part of the original proposal.

5. Strategic Plan

5.1. Mission Statement –

At the last meeting, Chair Forbes had asked Commissioner Pagano to put together a mission statement for the Park Commission as part of the Park System Plan update to help them make decisions about parks in general. Members discussed the draft mission statement and Chair Forbes suggested changing the term “public lands” to “common areas” so the statement would read as follows:

“To protect, maintain, and improve the parks and common areas of the City of Minnetonka Beach for the safe use and enjoyment of its residents”.

A motion was made by Commissioner Sperduto and seconded by Commissioner Boschwitz to adopt the Park Commission Mission Statement as amended. With all members voting in favor, motion carried.

Commissioner Pagano will work on Guiding Principles that support the mission statement for the April meeting. He will send out a draft prior to the meeting for input. Chair Forbes reminded members of the Open Meeting law requirements not to have email discussion about topics, however, comments on the draft can be sent to the Chair.

6. Old Business

Chair Forbes moved the added item, Review Rules of Procedure, to Old Business – Members reviewed the rules of procedure and made no changes. Council Liaison Myers pointed out that the liaison does not normally vote, but per City Ordinance Section 904, the liaison shall vote in the event of a tie.

A motion was made by Commissioner Pagano and seconded by Commissioner Rezabek to approve the Rules of Procedure with no changes. With all members voting in favor, motion carried.

7. New Business

7.1. Comprehensive Plan

Vice Chair Rezabek stated that she wanted to re-read the Comprehensive Plan as it relates to removing/replacing trees in the shore land protection area, and suggested that they may want to add a statement in the next Comprehensive Plan update about the issue of trees in the right of way.

Rezabek also wanted members to be aware of the proposed zoning code amendment that was underway by the Planning Commission. Public hearings will be happening over the next three months with the first one being Monday, February 27th.

7.2. Kaplan Tree

Chair Forbes updated everyone on the history of this request from Harris Kaplan to remove a tree in the right of way in front of Kaplan’s home that he believed to be diseased or dying. Commissioner Rezabek said that she was with Erik Paulsen from Bartlett when they previously looked at the tree

and at the time the tree was identified as a treatable ash tree and not a problem. Since that time, Chair Forbes did ask Paulsen to look at it again. With the information to date, Chair Forbes doesn't think there is a compelling reason to remove the tree. If this is the case, Kaplan will be informed and his recourse is to appeal to the City Council. Rezabek will ask Erik Paulsen to have another look at the tree and notify Administrator Griffin of the results.

Commissioner Pagano reminded members that removing it would conflict with city policies. Commissioner Sperduto does not support removing trees that are viable and healthy without an arborist's review. Commissioner Pagano said the Park Commission should take a strong position on requests to remove trees when there is no justification for removal. Chair Forbes stated that there are other trees in that same area that will actually need to come down so the area is "tree sensitive".

He stated that he believes what the commission is saying, and he agrees, is there are precedent reasons to be cautious about removing trees. Also, the city has already made a policy decision to invest \$20,000-30,000 in a Parks Budget in which most funds are allocated to protecting and planting trees, and this would be inconsistent with regularly allowing residents to remove trees. Third, the comprehensive plan indicates that there should be tree-lined streets throughout the city. Fourth is the location of the tree, which is in a "tree sensitive" area in that other trees may need to be removed, and while the trees are not in the Shoreland impact zone requiring protection, they are still close to the water. Finally, the trees soak up excess water from the land around the trees which can be quite wet.

A motion was made by Commissioner Pagano and seconded by Commissioner Sperduto that based on the guiding principles of the Park Commission no healthy tree should be removed from parks, common space or city right-of-way unless there is a public safety issue or health issue with the tree. With all members voting in favor, motion carried.

Commissioner Sperduto stated that the Park Commission are stewards of the city's parks, common areas, boulevards, and right of ways and must consider what is in the best interest of the community as a whole and not individual home owner's preferences.

Green Step Cities

Vice Chair Rezabek stated that Commissioners should look into Green Step cities and she asked them to go online and look up this organization. Minnesota has the largest ash population in the country. Green Step cities might have access to funding for tree planting.

Commissioner Sperduto mentioned that they should also consider plantings that are sensitive to bees.

8. Adjournment

Chair Forbes adjourned the meeting at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susanne Griffin, City Administrator